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HOW ABNORMAL CAN YOU GET?

By the Editor

Statesmen in the east and west have frequently stated in the past months that the situation regarding West Berlin is abnormal, and that a sensible, negotiated settlement must be reached.

On February 2nd this year the world could see just how abnormal the West Berlin situation is. On that date, the railway authorities of the German Democratic Republic showed representatives of the international press a tunnel which had been bored, from West Berlin, under the state frontier of the GDR.

The particular feature of this tunnel was that it was bored underneath a railway line over which a train runs every ten minutes. The tunnel had collapsed, but luckily under the railway platform, and not under the permanent way; if it had collapsed under the railway lines themselves, a frightful accident would have been almost inevitable.

In any civilised country, actions endangering railways lines are very serious offences. In the German Criminal Code, which is valid in both German states and in West Berlin, serious offences against railway safety can be punished with life imprisonment.

Now consider the abnormal reaction of the West Berlin authorities:

1. The West Berlin police must have been aware of the dangerous project, since they maintain a day-and-night patrol in the West Berlin street from which the tunnellers carried tools, wheelbarrows and huge baulks of timber into their subterranean passage.

2. After the tunnel had been discovered, an official spokesman of the West Berlin administration stated: "We have heard with great respect of this project. In the future too we shall regard such undertakings with respect. We cannot regard this as a breach of any law."

These astonishing sentiments mean that the West Berlin administration regards it as perfectly right and proper for official or unofficial organisations in West Berlin to infringe on the sovereignty of a neighbouring state by tunnelling underneath the state frontier. The West Berlin administration regards it as perfectly right and proper to dig holes under railway lines, endangering the lives of hundreds of people.

History knows of many cases in which governments and administrations have aided and abetted in frontier provocations and frontier incidents, generally in order to provoke a conflict. Recent German history, for instance, presents us with the "Gleiwitz Radio incident" in 1939, on the eve of World War Two, in which nazis disguised as Polish soldiers staged an attack on a radio station just inside the German border in order to provide Hitler with an excuse for invading Poland.

But in all these historical cases, the government staging the frame-up has tried to conceal its part in the plot.

It has remained for the West Berlin administration to declare its "respect" for the plotters, and to announce in advance its approval of future murderous conspiracies.

The West Berlin situation is certainly very, very abnormal. How much more abnormal does it have to get before something is done to clean it up?

The Frontier Tunnel

On February 2nd, journalists from all over the world were invited to an unusual press conference at Wollank Strasse Station, on the frontier between West Berlin and the German Democratic Republic.

In the vaults underneath the station they could view a deep tunnel which had been secretly built under the railway line. The tunnel, lined with pit props and supported with huge baulks of timber, had obviously been built by a West Berlin gang, since the railway vaults were only approachable from the western side of the frontier. Experts estimated that at least six men had been working on the excavation for some weeks before part of the tunnel collapsed.

The collapse of the tunnel led to a subsidence on the railway platform overhead, and this subsidence led to the discovery of the illicit excavation.

Erwin Kramer, Transport Minister of the GDR, who showed the tunnel to journalists, emphasised that a very serious railway accident had only just been avoided. If the tunnel collapse had occured two or three yards further on, it would have left a gaping hole under the railway line itself, and the next train passing the station would have been de-railed.

In connection with the discovery of the sabotage tunnel, the Foreign Ministry of the GDR addressed a note to the commander of the French occupation forces in West Berlin, since the western access to the tunnel was situated in the French sector of West Berlin. This note stated in part:

"In the past weeks hired agents from West Berlin broke into the installations of Wollank Strasse Station, which lies on the territory of the German Democratic Republic, and began to drive a tunnel under the railway lines. This tunnel led to a subsidence of the railway installa-

(cont. on next page)

(cont. from front page)

tions, and thus presented an acute danger to railway traffic, including the French military transports which pass over this stretch of railway. This was an unscrupulous attack on the life and health of persons using the railway...

"The obvious aim of the operation was to break into the territory of the GDR in order to introduce agents, commit acts of violence against the frontier installations, and thus to provoke a serious conflict.

"This criminal attack was prepared with the complicity and support of the West Berlin authorities. The West Berlin police stationed near Wollank Street Station gave cover to the transport of men and material for the construction of the tunnel. You can obtain particulars from the West Berlin police unit in this sector, which falls under your command.

"In the name of the Government of the GDR I protest most sharply against this attack on the territorial integrity of the GDR, and the attempt to provoke international incidents.

"The Government of the GDR expects you to take the strongest action against those responsible for this incident, in accordance with the occupation prerogatives which you claim, and expects you to take steps to prevent a repetition of such crimes."

The Chief of the Berlin Railway Administration, who is responsible for all railway lines in both East and West Berlin, sent a strongly-worded letter of protest to the West Berlin Senate. After outlining the facts about the tunnel, the letter stated:

"In the past I have repeatedly protested against provocative acts carried out by certain circles in West Berlin, acts which seriously endangered the safety of the city elevated railway and the whole railway system.

"This new attack endangered human life. Since the police under your command tolerated, shielded and supported this attack, I must draw your attention to your responsibility for these criminal acts.

"I demand that the persons responsible should be tracked down and heavily punished."

Journalists who inspected the site of the crime and the evidence collected by the East Berlin police investigators stated that there were enough clues for any reasonably effective detective force to track down the culprits within a matter of hours, if they wished to do so. One journalist, formerly himself a detective, told GERMAN REPORT: "If the West Berlin police wanted to find these men, they could do so easily. Amongst the clues found at the site of the crime were a number of handwritten notes giving the first names of several of the persons involved, and enough other evidence to give a fairly clear idea of the circles from which they came. In addition there were articles of clothing, such as worn shoes, which could easily be traced. Apart from this, the tools abandoned in the tunnel are covered with finger-prints. All this evidence is available to the West Berlin police if they want to use it. If no arrests are made, then this will be a clear sign that the police are working hand-in-glove with the criminals."

Commenting on the frontier tunnel, "Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party, stated:

"We have repeatedly stated that the remnants of World War Two must be eliminated, in order to prevent a new world war. But every day we encounter new 'remnants' and their effects. Let us take the tunnel under Wollank Strasse Station, for instance.

"West Berlin bandits drove a tunnel under the railway. It was pure luck that the railway platform collapsed, and not the rail-bed. It may even have been the intention of the bandits to damage the rail-bed; for along this railway run French military trains. Just imagine what would have happened if one of these trains had been derailed, and French soldiers had been killed. We, the German Democratic Republic, would have been accused of an act of aggression against the French Army. Such an incident could have been the beginning of an escalation to war."

The West German Eagle in Angola

The West German Government has been supplying large quantities of war material to the Portuguese troops fighting the Liberation Army in Angola, West German news magazine "Spiegel" reported on February 7th.

The weapons and military equipment include:

a) Sixteen large Dornier 27 planes, delivered to the Portuguese troops in Angola in early February;

b) Unknown, but probably large quantities of submachine guns; a total figure of 10,000 has been mentioned.

"Spiegel" pointed out that the submachine guns used by the Portuguese troops in Angola were stamped with the Federal German eagle. This means that they had come from the official stocks of the West German armed forces.

The submachine guns, which were made in Israel and supplied to West Germany last year, had been exported from West Germany in direct contravention of an agreement that they should not be re-exported. The Israeli Government has always refused to supply Portugal with weapons for her colonial wars.

Queried on the report, Colonel Schmueckle, official spokesman of the West German Defence Ministry, replied angrily "Not a single submachine gun from the stocks of the Bundeswehr has been supplied to the Portuguese Army."

Observers in Bonn believed that Colonel Schmueckle may have been telling the truth, though not the whole truth. Many of the Israeli-made burp guns had been supllied not to the Bundeswehr, but to the Federal Frontier Force, a large and heavily armed formation which does not form part of the Bundeswehr. The guns may have come from their stocks, these observers believe.

Strikers Sentenced

Sixty-four workers in a shoe factory in Nuremberg, West Germany, were ordered by the Labour Court on February 8th to pay 150,000 marks damages (about £12,500) to their employers because of the strike they have been leading there since December 12th 1961. The strike of the plant's 450 mostly women workers was in protest against the brutal and inhuman treatment of employees by the management, especially by Technical Director Farkas, Hungarian reactionary who fled to West Germany in 1956. The strike had been sparked in part by the suicide of an employee who had been sacked without notice by the company after 25 years with the plant.

Danger at the Newsstand

Public prosecutors in Munich, West Germany, have opened proceedings against the man who runs the newsstand at Munich's Central Station. His alleged offense is "communist propaganda" because he offers for sale the Soviet newspapers "Pravda" and "Izvestia". The bookdealers who import the newspaper have decided to cancel their orders. "It is practically impossible to check through every issue to see if there is anything dangerous. We are not interested in getting constant visits from the criminal police," the company said in explaining its decision.

The Biggest Bribe in History?

War Minister Strauss on the Spot

According to documentary evidence published in the West German news magazine "Spiegel" on January 31st, West German Defence Minister Franz Josef Strauss was recently on the receiving end of a bribery plan which would have netted him over £1,000,000, probably the biggest bribe in history.

Photostats and sworn depositions reproduced in "Spiegel" appeared to prove that Herr Strauss, the man who wants to arm West Germany with nuclear weapons, put in some hard work in an effort to win a building contractors' bribe of 11,250,000 marks — just over £1,000,000. Owing to no fault of his, the contract fell through, leaving Herr Strauss much poorer, and with a big crack in his reputation.

The complicated story of bribery and corruption, as retailed by "Spiegel", the biggest-circulation political magazine in West Germany, went like this:

Early in 1960, it became known that the US occupation forces in West Germany planned to construct a huge housing project for army families. The project was expected to cost 300 million marks, of which 90 million marks would remain as profit for the lucky West German building contractor who got the contract.

On April 13th 1960, two small-time Munich businessmen got together with Dr Hans Kapfinger, a prominent Bavarian Christian Democratic publisher and intimate friend of Minister Strauss. They offered him a 25% share of the huge profits expected if he could "use his influence" on his friend Strauss to push the contract into their hands.

In order to back up his personal influence on Strauss, they suggested that he should give the Defence Minister half of his share of the booty. This half-share would amount to over £1,000,000.

The "Spiegel" is not able to present any direct evidence of the negotiations between Kapfinger and Strauss — corruption on this scale is not likely to be committed to paper, but after a lapse of a few weeks Strauss went into action. The news magazine publishes the photostat of a copy of the letter which Minister Strauss wrote on July 20th 1960 to his American colleague, Mr Thomas S. Gates, US Secretary of Defence. The letter states in part:

"We have checked here the plans submitted by the office of Architect Schloss, Munich, and found them usable. If you intend to pursue the housing project for the US Army in Germany, I would request you to follow up this plan."

"The office of Architect Schloss" mentioned in the letter is, of course, the firm founded with the aid of Strauss' friend Kapfinger. There are two remarkable features about the letter to the US Defence Secretary:

1. It is a little unusual, to say the least of it, for ministers to write letters to foreign governments attempting to influence them in the award of a contract.

2. "The office of Architect Schloss" which is recommended for a huge contract is not a huge and weighty contracting firm which might be expected to bid for a contract of this size: it consisted of three men and a pokey office. The three men who had founded this fly-by-night firm were Lothar Schloss, who calls himself architect although he only studied architecture for a few months and received no diploma; Karl Willy Braun, who calls himself construction engineer, although he holds no diploma, and Johann Evangelist Kapfinger, a publisher who has never had anything to do with the building trade, and who, incidentally, was sentenced to six months imprisonment in 1962 for the rather off-beat offence of pandering.

Business lobbyists in Bonn found this angle of the Strauss bribe case the most puzzling. "If Strauss wanted to make some money on the side, why on earth did he get mixed up with this bunch of dead-heads?" an experienced contractor's agent commented to GERMAN REPORT correspondent. "Any of the really big firms in the contracting game would have been delighted to oblige, and he would have got his cut without any risk of the whole story coming out."

One of the most remarkable features of the "big bribe" case was the obvious reluctance shown by Defence Minister Strauss and the West German Government to do anything at all about the very serious charges made by "Spiegel". Foreign journalists in Bonn were unanimous that if a similar scandal had come to light in their countries, the minister implicated would either have taken immediate action for libel against the paper publishing such charges, or would at the very least have offered his resignation until the scandal had been cleared up.

Minister Strauss took no action at all for five days, although he is otherwise a notoriously litigious man: finally, on February 2nd, he filed vaguely-worded libel charges against "Spiegel". According to reliable government sources in Bonn he only took this action very reluctantly after leading Christian Democrats had put pressure upon him, because the unanswered bribery charges were causing much unrest amongst parliamentarians. It is worthy of note that he made no attempt to deny the authenticity of the incriminating letter to US Defence Minister Gates, and other letters reproduced in "Spiegel".

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WARNING – POISON!

Inside a W. German Militarist Newspaper

On almost any news-stand in West Germany or West Berlin you can buy a copy of a newspaper called "Deutsche Soldaten Zeitung", or "German Soldiers Weekly". It is a prosperous 12-page weekly, which for many years received a considerable subsidy from the West German Defence Ministry. A considerable proportion of its readers are soldiers and officers of the West German Bundeswehr.

This newspaper does not publish details of its circulation, but it is estimated at about 60,000 copies weekly. What does such a newspaper tell its readers? To find the answer to this question, let us take a close look at the contents of a recent issue, the issue dated January 26th 1962.

Main Thread

There is one main thread running through all its articles and news items: German militarism was always right and honourable, and is always right and honourable. The newspaper, which is written and edited with considerable journalistic flair, pretends from time to time to be shocked by some "unpleasantnesses" connected with World War Two; but its consistent line in connection with nazi war crimes may be summed up as follows:

1. Such crimes were either committed by a small handful of professional criminals, or in some cases by honourable officers who believed it was their duty to obey all orders given them.

2. Nazi war crimes have been greatly exaggerated; "only" a few hundred thousand Jews were gassed, and not many millions.

3. Anyway, the allies were just as bad.

These principles are shown particularly clearly in the issue of the "Deutsche Soldaten Zeitung" now under review. Its main headline on the front page shouts "The Truth about Auschwitz", and the article under this headline is a masterpiece of special pleading and falsification. It starts innocently enough: "The biggest trial in German history will probably be held this year. There will probably be about 30 accused in this monster trial, dealing with the murders in Auschwitz Concentration Camp... Of course the Germany-haters at home and abroad will attempt to couple this trial with a general propaganda campaign against the Germans, but on the other hand it will bring us more clarity about the murders in this, the biggest German concentration camp."

After this "objective" beginning, the article gets down to its real purpose: to attempt to prove that the nazis "only" killed some hundreds of thousands of Jews, instead of the estimated four to six million, the figures accepted by all the scientific authorities on the subject.

The "proof" provided by the "Soldaten Zeitung" consists of some complicated juggling with statistics. First of all, Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Hoess is quoted as stating that 2,500,000 Bulgarian Jews were to be gassed; the "Soldaten Zeitung" then states, quite truthfully, that only about 50,000 Jews lived in Bulgaria, and thus proves, to its own satisfaction, that more than two million of Hitler's victims have to be subtracted from the accepted total.

The article then states: "The statistic of 5 or 6 million Jews murdered is today no longer credited anywhere. The figure of 4 or 3 or 2 million Jews appears to be out of date, according to the latest population statistics... The number of persons murdered will some day be shown by official scientific research, but it will certainly run into hundreds of thousands."

Regret

The writer of the article expresses facile regret that several hundreds of thousands of persons were murdered; but of course the whole object of the exercise is to throw doubt on all the overwhelming evidence of German war crimes.

In passing, the same article recalls: "We were recently able to prove that no gassings took place in concentration camps in the Altreich (Germany in its 1937 frontiers, ed). Unfortunately this does not allow us to draw the conclusion that there were no gas chambers at all." This statement is untrue, since there were certainly gassings at Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp near Berlin, and many other places; and secondly it is completely irrelevant whether the nazi gas chambers were situated in the "Altreich" or in other territories occupied by the nazis. This statement is just another of the red herrings which the "Soldaten Zeitung" is so fond of drawing across the track.

Apart from this hypocritical and sickening article on Auschwitz, what has the "Soldaten Zeitung" got to offer its readers?

U-Boat Knights

On page two there is a long article "Knights of the Deep", rhapsodising on the achievements of "the most successful U-boat commanders in the world" in World War One.

On page 3, the "Soldaten Zeitung" describes American preparations to use chemical warfare against partisans in South Vietnam, and comments: "Thank God, German troops in World War Two never thought of using such methods. Otherwise they would have been executed."

On page 4 this neo-nazi newspaper works itself into a frenzy over a book recently published in West Germany entitled "Hitler: The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" by Robert Neumann and Helga Koppel (Published by Kurt Desch, Munich). This excellent book consists almost entirely of documentary photographs of nazi crimes. The "Soldaten Zeitung" comments:

"A lot of nasty books have been published in the German Federal Republic, but this is one of the foulest. It is not an 'anti-nazi' book as it claims to be; we are convinced that it is an anti-German book. Repeatedly Communist newspapers are quoted as evidence of resistance... but there is not a word about the crimes committed against the Germans by the unleashed mob in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. It is a book without dignity. In no other country in the world could such a book be published, a book which slanders its own, the German, nation."

On page 5, under the headline "Justice for Those Who Fell on the Eastern Front" the newspaper prints a report on memorial ceremonies held in Belgium for Belgian quislings who served in the nazi Wehrmacht.

A long quotation is given from the "Bulletin of the Former Flemish SS-Soldiers on the Eastern Front" stating: "These soldiers sacrificed themselves for a fine and great cause."

On page 6, Dr Gerhard Frey, the editor of the "Soldaten Zeitung", gives his opinions at great length on the West German press. He notes with satisfaction that in most papers "a programme of re-education is not consciously followed.". The significance of this sentence is that in the special vocabulary of the West German neo-nazis, "re-education" means any attempt to tell the German public about nazi crimes.

Dr Frey is, however, less satisfied with the role played by some of the West German weekly illustrated papers: "They play a main part in the programme of 're-education' ... The amount of nonsense they have published in the past few years is intolerable. They have more than fulfilled their norm in falsifying history ... blaming Germany for the air-raid terror (in World War Two, ed); presenting the 'Lebensborn', the motherhood homes (of the nazis, ed.) as breeding institutions; and describing the German soldiers as murderers."

On page 7 pride of place is given to an article which at first sight seems to be out of place in a neo-nazi newspaper. It is a fierce polemic accusing West German author Dr Gert Buchheit of having been a fascist! Most of the article consists of extracts from a book on Mussolini written by Dr Buchheit in 1938, full of anti-Semitic passages and praise of Hitler and Mussolini.

It took me some time to make head or tail of the article; finally I discovered the reason: recently, Dr Buchheit, who appears to have a considerable facility for revising his opinions, has published two books criticising Hitler and the leaders of the Wehrmacht. The "Soldaten Zeitung", rather obliquely, is now hauling him over the coals for his treachery to the cause of German militarism.

Old Officers

Page 8 gives biographical notes about a number of old officers' families, and recalls details of an obscure "Portuguese atrocity" committed against German soldiers on the borders of South-West Africa in 1914. Page 9 offers a run-of-the-mill reactionary reportage on current British politics.

Page 10 of the "Soldaten Zeitung" is of more interest. It opens with a correspondence column, filled with

DEUTSCHE
Soldaten Zeitung
UND NATIONAL-ZEITUNG

Brief eines gefolter

The "German Soldiers' Newspaper and National Newspaper" — a militarist West German newspaper which says outright what other papers only hint at.

the sort of letters one might expect in a journal of this hue. One particularly charming letter, referring to the war crimes charges made against West German General Adolf Heusinger, states: "Heusinger is my godfather, and from what I know of him, the charges made against him by the Soviets must be pure nonsense." A letter from South Africa claims that Negroes in South Africa live like lords, and continues: "Many people in Europe really believe that the natives here are oppressed and inhumanly treated; some Europeans may even think that the lot of Negroes in South Africa is scarcely better than that of the Germans living in the Soviet Zone."

The most interesting item on this page, however, consists of "Reports from the Associations", a column giving news of the activities of various militarist bodies such as the "Stahlhelm" (The Steelhelmets). A long extract is reproduced from a bulletin published by the "Silent Aid Association for War Prisoners". This body, usually known by its German name of "Stille Hilfe", became notorious soon after World War Two, when it became known that it was running the "underground railway" which was spiriting wanted nazis out of Germany to Spain and Argentina. The extract from the bulletin of the "Silent Aid" complains that "German men are still sitting behind bars in France, Belgium and Holland ... in Poland, Czechoslovakia ... We ask: has the time not come to release the last prisoners or convicted men of the Second World War ... There are many amongst them who believed that they were doing their duty when they carried out the orders which they received ... We also have a great task to do for those people of other nations who are closely linked with Germandom, the volunteers who fought during the last war on the side of the German Wehrmacht against bolshevism."

Page 11 consists of more adulatory biographies of former German generals, including one who served a war crimes sentence. Page 12, the back page of this issue, is devoted to the 59th installment of a vast historical study designed to prove that Germany was not responsible for starting World War Two.

Dangerous Poles

A small news item on the same page accuses US President Kennedy of employing Poles in prominent positions in the United States "because his brother-in-law is a Pole", and thus weakening American defences against Communist infiltration.

This short summary will have shown the sort of poison which is being handed out, week by week, to tens of thousands of readers in West Germany. It is difficult to estimate the true importance and impact of a newspaper of this character; apologists for the West German Government claim that the "Soldaten Zeitung" and other newspapers of a similar tendency are "outsiders" and do not reflect any large segment of public opinion. After working as a journalist in Germany for many years I beg to differ; the only difference between the "Soldaten Zeitung" and most of the mass circulation "respectable" papers is that the "Soldaten Zeitung" states openly what the respectable papers only hint at for fear of shocking the public opinion of the world. One thing is certain: the "Soldaten Zeitung" reflects the opinions today of a very large proportion of the civil servants, judges, police and Bundeswehr officers who run West Germany.

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Warning — Satirist at Work

Viewing the Berlin Wall

By Michael Frayn

MIKE, old boy *(said Rollo Swavely, the well-known public relations consultant)*, you gave us quite a nice little spread over that bingo debate, and frankly I should like to do something for you in return. Have you ordered, by the way? They do an awfully good tournedos here, you know.

The point is, Mike, I've got a story that's rather up your street. I'll be putting it out to everyone tomorrow, but I thought you might like to have it today—for old times' sake, and strictly off the record, of course. You remember I have the personal account for Christopher Smoothe, the Minister of Chance and Spec? Well, he's going over to Berlin next Friday to visit the Wall.

Oh no, old boy, he's not the last—I don't think the Minister of Ag and Fish has gone yet. Anyway, here's his programme:

12.00 noon: Arrive Tempelhof Airport. Met by Federal Minister of Bluff and Counterbluff. Exchange speeches about West's faith and ideals.

1.00 p.m.: Lunch with leading West German armaments manufacturers. Gives speech about necessity of remaining strong in face of the Communist threat.

2.30 p.m.—2.45 p.m.: Applause.

3.00 p.m.: Drives in state procession to the Official Wall Viewing-point.

Now here's where we're going to need a bit of very delicate timing. The Official Viewing-point has a fantastically busy schedule, of course, and it's booked up for months ahead. They only managed to get Christopher in at all by cancelling Cynthia Stocking, the former prospective Deb of the Year. Even so, he's timed to arrive at 3.35—only a minute and a half after the departure of the last visitor — Rock Richmond, the famous rock 'n' roll singer. (Incidentally, I hope this burgundy's not too jejune for your taste.)

3.37 p.m.: Official Guide explains history and architecture of Wall, pointing out in particular any features of chance or speculative interest.

3.40 p.m.—3.43 p.m.: Mr Smoothe looks at Wall.

3.44 p.m.: Mr Smoothe mounts to viewing platform and looks over Wall into East Berlin. Uses panoramic direction indicator marking principal political prisons, etc. Official Guide directs his attention to any secret police arrests, forced labour, mass starvation, or other signs of repression which are to be seen, depending on visibility.

3.47 p.m.—3.50 p.m.: Mr Smoothe lost in silent contemplation.

3.51 p.m.: Mr Smoothe is photographed looking into distance with compassionate expression.

3.52 p.m.: Mr Smoothe is photographed turning back towards West with look of determination to preserve the solidarity of the Western alliance.

3.53 p.m.: Overcoming his evident emotion, Mr Smoothe speaks.

"When I came here today," he will say, "I little guessed how deeply —how very deeply—I should be moved by what I saw. But now, thanks to those brave and selfless West Berlin carpenters who erected this viewing platform, I have seen the Communist world at first hand. I have seen, with my own eyes, what look for all the world like the streets, the houses, and the people we know so well and love so dearly in the West. But what a terrible difference there is! I think I need only say that whereas we are on this side of the Wall which you have shown me with such heartfelt hospitality, they are on the other side."

It's a rather short speech, but at four o'clock precisely the next VIP, Walter Wagstaff, the Free World Showbiz columnist of the "New York Herald Angel", is due at the Official Viewing-point. But later on in the day we hope Christopher will return to the Wall and switch on a chain of giant loud-speakers to inaugurate the Free World Bingo Game. The calls should be audible all over East Berlin, and we hope resistance workers will smuggle the cards in and out.

Well, that's the programme, Mike. (Shall I order another bottle, by the way?) It should nail those absurd stories that Christopher's not deeply and passionately interested in human affairs. There's only one tiny worry I have — and this of course really is off the record — and that's exactly what we'd do if the East Berliners built a viewing platform on *their* side of the Wall, and started running VIP trips to stare at Christopher and the rest. I know it would seem absolutely unbelievable cynicism to us, but I wouldn't put it past the Communists to use a situation like this for the purposes of propaganda.

("The Guardian", Manchester, January 12th 1962)

Labour Battles Loom in W. Germany

A big strike wave in West Germany appeared likely in late February, after the powerful Metal-Workers Trade Union and Building Trade Union lodged claims for wage increases to meet the great rise in the cost of living.

A strike ballot amongst metal workers in the south-western part of the German Federal Republic showed 86% of workers were in favour of strike action if claims for an 8% wage increase were not met. Employers in this province had offered a derisory 1% increase.

Metal trade employers threatened a nation-wide lock-out if workers in this one province went out on strike.

Discussions on wage and holiday increases in the building trade during February revealed that building employers in West Germany still adopt an almost medieval attitude towards trade unions: the employers announced that they were willing to grant special "holiday pay" of 80 marks, but only to workers who were not trade union members.

Commenting on labour unrest in West Germany, the conservative Paris newspaper "Le Figaro" stated on February 3rd: "The social climate is not good in West Germany today. This is due to the fact that during the past seven or eight months the economy has entered a new phase. The 'economic miracle' and the period of rapid expansion has ended. There is no sign of crisis yet, but the economy has become stabilised, and wishes to consolidate the position won ... For this reason the employers are determined to stand fast in their conflict with the metal workers union. For the first time in twelve years they have threatened a lock-out. Industrial peace in the Federal Republic has never before been threatened by a conflict of such size."

A Doctor Who Urged 'Special Treatment'

Today a certain Dr Kurt Blome maintains a flourishing practice at 4, Bornstrasse, Dortmund, West Germany. Few of his patients know that his former titles were "Head of the Nazi Party Main Health Office" and "Deputy Reich Health Fuehrer".

On November 18th 1942, Dr Blome addressed a letter to SS General Artur Greiser, Gauleiter of "Warthegau", that part of occupied Poland which was directly incorporated in the German Reich, suggesting that 35,000 Polish TB patients in Warthegau should be gassed.

His letter, produced as Official Document NO. 250 at the US War Crimes Court in Nuremberg in 1947, stated in part:

"Sober consideration shows that the easiest way (to deal with the TB problem in Warthegau) would be the following: during the first half of 1943 the entire population, both German and Polish, should be x-rayed. The Germans would be treated in accordance with the usual regulations. The estimated 35,000 Poles suffering from incurable TB should be given 'special treatment'. I have made the necessary arrangements so that these radical measures could be taken within half a year... If complete secrecy can be guaranteed, then we can dismiss any hesitations."

In the further course of his letter, Dr Blome made it quite clear that by the term 'special treatment' he meant gassing, since he referred to previous experiences with euthanasia, and spoke of the fact that it would be difficult to preserve secrecy since relatives would note that patients would never return from "special treatment"; His only objection to the mass gassing was that it might become the subject for "enemy propaganda".

Today, Dr Blume, without a stain on his character, treats his patients at 4, Bornstrasse, Dortmund, West Germany.

Adenauer-Diem Axis

West Germany will be asked to give military aid to Premier Ngo Dinh-Diem, dictator of South Vietnam, the West German newspaper "Die Welt" reported on February 5th. The newspaper quoted US Senator Allen Ellender, Democrat, as source for the report.

LOOKING BACKWARDS

In this column GERMAN REPORT hopes to present, at fairly regular intervals, flash-backs to German history 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago. A column of this sort cannot hope to present a rounded historical picture; it may help to recall some striking historical parallels, and remind readers where things went wrong in the past.

1922

"I am only writing this so that it may be quoted again in eight years time... Danger threatens from the Reichswehr...

"The barrack rooms are filled with Imperial symbols, with pictures of the Kaiser, with nationalist pamphlets and newspapers. The officers, old General Staff men or very young gentlemen, have exactly those reactionary opinions which plunged us into misery before.

"Every year the huge budget for the Reichswehr goes through parliament, and the Majority Social Democrats do nothing to stop it...

The day will come when something will happen. Everybody who knows the facts knows the role which the Reichswehr will play. The Kapp Putsch was a general rehearsal which failed. The performance has been postponed...

"In eight years you will know who to thank – our Government, our Reichstag".

Kurt Tucholsky in "Die Weltbuehne", Berlin, February 23rd 1922

(GERMAN REPORT comments: Tucholsky, famed progressive journalist of the Weimar Republic, was three years out in his prediction. It was not until 11 years later that the Reichswehr helped Hitler to power.)

1932

February 15th: Social Democratic Police President of Berlin bans Communist newspaper "Rote Fahne" for 14 days for "endangering law and order".

February 26th: The Provincial Government of Brunswick appoints Adolf Hitler as senior civil servant. This appointment confers German citizenship on Hitler, hitherto Austrian, and makes it possible for him to stand as candidate in forthcoming presidential elections.

February 29th: Social Democrats decide to vote for Hindenburg as "lesser evil" in coming presidential elections. Other main candidates are Hitler (Nazi Party) and Ernst Thaelmann (Communists).

(from Horkenbach "Das Deutsche Reich", Berlin 1933)

1942

"The object of the nazis... is to separate the United States, Britain, China and Russia, and isolate them one from another... Today all the United Nations salute the superb Russian Army as it celebrates its 24th anniversary."

U.S. President Roosevelt, February 23rd 1942

"Severe violations of labour discipline (on the part of slave labourers) shall be met with special treatment. Special treatment is hanging. It should not take place in the immediate vicinity of the camp. A certain number (of slave labourers) should however attend the special treatment."

Order signed by Heinrich Himmler, SS Reich Fuehrer, February 20th 1942.

1952

"Germany needs a peace treaty immediately in order to prevent the danger of a reborn nazi army and new attempts by German militarism to launch an aggression, the Government of the German Democratic Republic stated in a letter addressed to the Governments of the Four Great Powers.

"The German people were fully aware of their guilt for the Hitler war, but they believed that they were entitled to a peace treaty as laid down at the Potsdam Conference, stated the letter, dispatched on February 13th."

GERMAN REPORT, February 29th 1952

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

We like startling you with sensational disclosures, and we have a real honey this time. GERMAN REPORT has discovered the most powerful men in the western world: they are three minor western allied officials who sit in a little office in West Berlin. These three men, according to official statements made in Washington and London, are so omnipotent that they can control the policies of the otherwise fairly influential governments of Britain and the United States.

You probably find this hard to believe: but would you doubt the word of the British and American Governments? Please regard this as a rhetorical question, and read on to solve the mystery.

Footballers

Oddly enough, the story begins with a few dozen footballers, ice-hockey players and winter sports experts, and to find out where they come in we have to indulge in a short historical survey of the way in which German participation in international sports has developed since World War Two.

When German athletes came back into the international arena after the war, various organisational forms were adopted, more or less by chance, in the various branches.

In most cases both the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic were finally accepted as full members of the international organisations, and sent their own teams to international championships. This system worked well enough, though there were some incidents, such as the case last year when the West German ice-hockey team quit an international championship in Switzerland for fear that it might need to stand up when the GDR national anthem was played.

But recently NATO has raised its ugly head. It may seem difficult at first to see the connection between a military alliance and international sport, but the connection is there all right. A few months ago the NATO states, acting under pressure from the West German Government, decided that GDR citizens should not be allowed to visit NATO states, even for such peaceful purposes as playing football or chess.

The difficulty is that quite a number of world championships, or qualifying bouts for championships, are staged in countries which belong to NATO; at the same time, most international sports organisations have a paragraph in their rules stating that championships can only be held in countries which are ready to allow all competitors to enter, whatever country they may come from.

Without Champions

As a result of the NATO rulings, several world championships have had to be cancelled, or transferred to neutral countries, where generals do not have the last say in sports affairs. A World Chess tournament was transferred from the NATO country Holland to neutral Sweden a few weeks ago, and this month the World Alpine Skiing Championships due to be held in Chamonix, France, had to be cancelled. Britain has been affected too: a European football bout could not take place recently because the GDR players were not able to enter Britain.

But you may be asking what all this has got to do with the three omnipotent little men in their pokey office in West Berlin. The point is that these three men, together with a few secretaries, constitute something called the "Allied Travel Board". After the war, when the whole of Germany was under military occupation, the Allied Control Council established this Allied Travel Board as its passport department, entitled to issue travel documents to German citizens who wished to go abroad. When the two German states were established in 1949, they both began to supply their citizens with their own passports in the normal way, and the Allied Travel Board could well have put up the shutters.

However, the western allies refused not only to recognise the existence of the German Democratic Republic, but also refused to recognise its passports. As a result, for the past twelve years, GDR citizens who wanted to visit Britain, France, the USA and a few other countries, have had to go to this Allied Travel Board in West Berlin, run by British, French and US officials, and get special "travel documents" from them. The relevant visa was then stamped in this travel document. Oddly enough, the Allied Travel Board was able to recognise GDR passports, which were otherwise ruled not to exist: it insisted on GDR citizens bringing along their normal passports to prove their identity.

Recently, and particularly in connection with the ban on travel to NATO states, the British, French and American Governments have realised that the Allied Travel Board, which they run, gives them a lovely alibi for refusing visas. In the past few weeks, spokesmen for the British, French and American Governments, when asked why they have refused to issue visas for GDR athletes to attend ice-hockey and ski contests, have washed their hands in innocence, like Pontius Pilate, and declared that they are quite ready to give the visas, but that the nasty Allied Travel Board in West Berlin will not issue the travel documents for them to stamp the visas in.

Real Rulers

Which brings us back to our starting point. If we are ready to take the word of these western spokesman, then they can be blithely overruled by the British, American and French clerks in the Allied Travel Board in West Berlin. Which leads us logically to the conclusion that these three clerks are the real rulers of the western world.

But to be quite serious for a moment, this prank is wearing rather thin. Sports organisations in socialist and neutral countries are not going to tolerate the NATO boycott on GDR athletes, which means there is a very real danger that international sport will grind to a halt, all because of West German pressure on its NATO allies.

* * *

Youth at Helm?

"These members of the young executive team Mr Khrushchov has gathered are in their late 30's and early 10's." — **New York Times, February 5th 1962.**

This would be bringing in young blood with a vengeance: but I fear it is only a printing error.

* * *

Political slogans and placards in the GDR tend to be worthy but a little stodgy, so I was delighted to hear from Cuba of a placard which deserves a big prize: "Yankees: if you don't like living 90 miles from a socialist country, why don't you move?"

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